

BOOK REVIEWS

Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality. By Jay Prosser.
Columbia University Press, New York, 1998, 270 pp., \$21.95.

Reviewed by Patricia Elliot, Ph.D.¹

I have been interested in transsexuals not as “exotic” but as persons who suffer for both personal and political reasons. Following Phillips (1995), I would say that the importance of psychoanalysis lies in its capacity to provide a language “for what matters most to us; for what we suffer from and for, for how and why we take our pleasures” (p. xvi). Prosser’s analysis of transsexuality, defined by the activity of “entering into a lengthy, formalized, and normally substantive transition: a correlated set of corporeal, psychic, and social changes” (p. 4), provides considerable insight into a specific process of suffering and transformation. Drawing on transsexual autobiographies as well as his own experience as a FTM (female-to-male transsexual), Prosser produces a psychoanalytically inspired analysis of processes that are part of his own history. Moreover, in daring to address concepts of fantasy, yearning, and loss, Prosser offers us a psychological account of unusual experiences that are rarely presented in purely descriptive terms. I believe that Prosser’s study offers the most sophisticated theoretical analysis of at least one form of transsexuality to date, even if, as I suggest, he tends to underestimate the role of the subject in the process of embodiment.

Prosser argues that transsexuals have a different experience of embodiment than nontranssexuals, and a particular response to that experience that distinguishes them, for the most part, from other transgender persons. Indeed, he urges that new “paradigms for writing bodily subjects” (p. 12) be developed from the analysis of transsexual narratives, paradigms that would address the question of the body’s materiality. Making this argument leads Prosser to a series of debates with queer and transgender theory on the one hand, and to a detailed, psychoanalytically informed theorization of transsexual experience on the other. Taking issue with the tendency of some queer and transgender theorists, such as Butler (1993) and Stone

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(1991), to read transsexuality as either a “bad literalization” of gender or a “good deliteralization” of gender, Prosser argues that these readings inevitably eclipse the specificity of transsexual experience. And contrary to queer theory’s attempts to champion the transsexual as revealing a shift “away from the embodiment of sexual difference” (through blurring boundaries, revealing that “sex” is immaterial or really gender all along), he argues that transsexual transition shifts the subject “more fully into it” (p. 6). Prosser’s description of transsexual transition as motivated by “an initial absence of and striving for” the feeling of embodiment (p. 7), and as “the transformation of an unlivable shattered body into a livable whole” (p. 92), prompts him to turn to psychoanalysis in order to deepen his understanding of these processes. Although Prosser’s engagement with queer theory and with psychoanalytic theory both constitute valuable contributions to the larger field of transsexual and transgender research, Prosser’s engagement with psychoanalytic theory will be discussed in more detail here.

For Prosser, the importance of transsexual narrative is to emphasize the necessity of (sexed) embodiment to the subject, where “embodiment is as much about feeling one inhabits material flesh as the flesh itself” (p. 7). In fact, the claim that “owning one’s skin” is necessary for any subject’s well-being is the first assumption in Prosser’s argument. The second is that some transsexuals, whose body image contrasts with their visible body, are unable to “own” their material bodies. The third is that, faced with what for them is an unlivable conflict, these transsexuals locate inappropriateness in the material body, not the body image. The logical conclusion is that they seek to alter the flesh (not the body image) as a solution to the human necessity to feel embodied. A few more points suffice to complete this very brief outline of his theory.

Read through French psychoanalyst Anzieu, Prosser argues Freud’s point that the body, as an image of self in which we invest, is *not* synonymous with the material body or organism. Moreover, he argues that “body image can feel sufficiently substantial as to persuade the transsexual to alter his or her body to conform to it. The image of wrong embodiment describes most effectively the experience of pre-transition (dis)embodiment: the feeling of a sexed body dysphoria profoundly and subjectively experienced” (p. 69). In this description, it is the *body image* that “has a material force, not the physical body itself” (p. 69). According to Anzieu (1989), the skin ego is an embodied entity, not just an image; it is “an organ enabling and illustrating the psychic/corporeal interchange of subjectivity” (p. 72). As Prosser explains it, the skin, “as the point of contact between material body and body image, between visible and felt matter” (p. 72), becomes a major site of conflict for the transsexual. If “the skin is the locale for the physical experience of body image and the surface upon which is projected the psychic representation of the body,” then one can only feel “at home in one’s skin” (p. 72) if material body and body image correspond.

Finally, it is important to understand Prosser’s view of surgery and its effects as both creating a “feeling of bodily integrity” (p. 79) and rectifying specific “body

image distortions" (p. 85). Surgery is said to be "a fantasy of restoring the body to the self" (p. 82) and a "drive to get the body back to what should have been" (p. 83). Like some forms of cosmetic surgery, Prosser explains, in which a body part that has been disowned is reconstructed, there is a beneficial or healing effect. Prosser refers to the work of Hans Sacks to describe two body-image distortions that also accompany transsexual experience: (1) body agnosia, or the forgetting of specific body parts, and (2) phantomization, or the ability to imagine body parts that have been "lost" and that should have been there: "In the case of the transsexual the body constructed through sex reassignment surgery is not one that actually existed in the past, one that is literally re-membered, but one that should have existed; sex reassignment surgery is a recovery of what was not" (p. 84).

My critical engagement with this text begins with an appreciation of Prosser's powerful and insightful reading of this experience and is intended as a respectful tribute to it. Prosser provides us with a coherent narrative and a detailed description of at least one form of transsexual experience. I suggest, however, that more careful attention to the analysis of "feelings" and to the psychoanalytic emphasis on the subject of the unconscious could enhance an already fruitful discussion.

Prosser borrows Freud's concept of the body ego in order "to materialize the psyche, to argue its corporeal dependence" (p. 42). The body image has a material reality that is said both to produce the image and to be produced by it: sex is always invested in the flesh. But here Prosser seems to conflate the feeling of one's sex with the flesh itself. For example, he argues that the key to transsexual narrative is to see "how the material flesh may resist its cultural inscription" (p. 7). But to argue that feelings about one's embodiment are synonymous with the flesh is to lose the concept of psychic reality and of the subject. Processes of representation, the idiosyncratic creation of meaning, and the specific dynamics by which a relationship to an (internalized) "Other" is forged are also lost to Prosser's analysis. Given that for him a relationship seems to exist between the subject's sense of gender identity and their "feelings of the body," it is difficult to understand why he would reduce that relationship to bodily feelings alone. We do not have to leap to the opposite conclusion that bodies (or subjects, for that matter) are merely discursive effects in order to entertain the idea that our psychic investments in the body have a relationship to what is physically experienced.

For Freud (1984), the ego may be "first and foremost a body ego" (p. 364), but it is also an agency that strives to create a life for the subject between the demands of the social world, the demands of the internalized Other, and its own demand for love. Prosser's point that transsexuals demonstrate the inadequacy of theories of social determinism, in which the body is written on by the social, is well taken. However, this critique comes as no surprise to psychoanalytic theorists for whom the body is reducible neither to biology nor to the social. For the psychoanalytic theorist, however, it is not the material flesh that resists cultural inscription but the subject who resists. For Shepherdson (1994), this is because the subject is not a socially determined thing; for Rose (1986), it is because "there is a resistance

to identity at the very heart of psychic life" (p. 91) so that the subject never fits neatly into socially prescribed identities; for Copjec (1990), it is because there is no subject without conflict; and, for Freud, it is because there is such a thing as psychic reality. I am suggesting that psychoanalysis offers additional contributions, three of which I describe, that could be used to enhance Prosser's theorization of transsexual embodiment.

First, rather than seeing conflict as a result of bodily resistance or a function of simple human need, as Prosser does, we could use psychoanalytic distinctions among need, demand, and desire to sort out different kinds of conflict and examine how those conflicts locate themselves in specific bodily zones and functions. Second, to avoid reducing the complexity of the body to either a biological given or a cultural product, it is useful to keep in mind the psychoanalytic emphasis on the corporeal satisfaction of the drive and the symbolic nature of the symptom (where memory is written on the flesh). Third, Freud taught us to read in the body the effects of unconscious investments made as a result of our inevitable dependence on and construction of the (internalized) Other. Far from reducing the body to "someone else's idea" or rendering it unknowable, as Prosser fears, psychoanalysis offers us a way to make sense of what we have become both subject of and subject to.

Obviously, I find Prosser's description of transsexual embodiment compelling. It both confirms other autobiographical descriptions I've read and raises useful questions for contemporary queer and transgender theory. Moreover, Prosser's use of psychoanalysis to theorize bodies that, like all bodies, are never simply given by nature or by culture, is a promising way to pursue the complexity he describes. When Prosser writes about the transsexual "body narrative," the "skin ego," and the "recalcitrance of the flesh," however, it seems as though the subject gets left out. But when he describes the disembodied subject who fantasizes a return to "what should have been"; who talks about yearning, loss, and even desire, then the subject reappears. A more detailed psychoanalytic account of these unconscious aspects of the transsexual subject's relationship to embodiment would enrich our understanding of the specific experience Prosser has done so much to clarify.

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Pedophiles and Priests: Anatomy of a Contemporary Crisis. By Philip Jenkins.

Oxford University Press, New York, 1996, 214 pp., \$36.95 (Canadian).

Reviewed by Jay R. Feierman, M.D.²

Starting in the mid-1980s, *The National Catholic Reporter*, a liberal Catholic newspaper, began publishing articles about “pedophile priests” in North America, culminating in reporter Jason Berry’s (1992) influential book, *Lead Us Not Into Temptation: Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children*. In Andrew M. Greeley’s foreword, he describes its content as revealing “what may be the greatest scandal in the history of religion in America and perhaps the most serious crisis Catholicism has faced since the Reformation” (p. xiii). Berry reports that in the decade after 1982, about 400 Catholic clergy in North America were accused of sexual misconduct with minors, part of what he saw as a larger issue—the homosexual subversion of the Roman Catholic Church—with estimates that up to half of all Catholic priests in North America may be homosexual. Berry’s book ends with an accusatory indictment of the church hierarchy, which he says has allowed the erosion of seminary formation and gay behavior patterns in rectories and religious communities—all in the name of celibacy. Berry describes mandatory celibacy, which has been in effect since 1139, as a political and theological model that has failed and whose continuity is propagated by an ecclesiastic, pedophile-harboring power structure that rules the church out of fear of loss of their own power.

With the above as background, enter the volume under review, in which Berry’s book is cited 39 times in endnotes. Jenkins claims that, “In reality, Catholic clergy are not necessarily represented in the sexual abuse phenomenon at a rate higher than or equal to their numbers in the clerical profession as a whole” (p. 8). Both Berry and Jenkins acknowledge that almost all of the reported cases involve priests and pubescent boys, which technically is called either *ephebophilia* or *pederasty*, rather than *pedophilia*. Jenkins estimates that between 1960 and 1992, approximately 150,000 Roman Catholic clergy served in North America. Only a handful of Catholic priests were publicly accused of sexual impropriety with minors in the period prior to 1982. Of the approximately 400 that were publicized after 1982, many involved behaviors that had occurred decades earlier. Jenkins argues that 400 priests accused out of 150,000 priests served represents only a fraction of a percent, hardly enough to qualify as the greatest scandal in the history of religion in America and the greatest crisis for Roman Catholicism since the Protestant Reformation.

Jenkins argues that the pedophile priest crisis was “framed” by the already existing women’s movement that began in the 1970s and the growing awareness of child sexual abuse in the 1980s. He argues that in reality the pedophile priest crisis is a “social construction” that fits best into what sociologists since the 1970s

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have called a *moral panic*, which he defines as “a sudden manifestation of exaggerated public fear and concern over an apparently novel threat” (p. 169). Jenkins adds: “Panics are important because they reflect deep underlying social tensions over matters as diverse as ethnicity, social change, and a crisis in values and social attitudes” (p. 170). He continues:

As in other historical periods in which there has been intense hostility to the church and its clergy, it is not necessary to suppose that the frequency or gravity of clerical misdeeds has increased significantly in recent years. What has changed is the moral perception of the public and, crucially, of the Catholic laity themselves, who now provide a hungrily receptive audience for claims of priestly atrocities. (p. 170)

Jenkins argues that “the anticlerical insurgency has historically portended periods of sweeping and often painful internal reform for the church, marked by growing intrusions from the secular state and its legal apparatus” (p. 170).

With such different perspectives, the real question is, Who is correct—Berry or Jenkins? Berry is a journalist, not an academician. His methods are those of descriptive, investigative journalism, which, by selectively directing the reader’s awareness and attention, help to create the crisis about which he writes, similar to how a measuring device can effect what is being measured in physics. Berry does not have the training, nor is he expected to, to determine the causes of social phenomena. Jenkins, however, is an academic social scientist who potentially has this capacity. If social science is judged by the same criteria by which physical and natural sciences are judged, Jenkins’ arguments, albeit rhetorically persuasive, are scientifically weak. All of the data that Jenkins used is public information, available in various databases, most of which are accessible on the Internet. However, Jenkins treats the data anecdotally rather than systematically without using the power of quantitative, statistical methods. An example of the persuasive power of quantitative, statistical social science would be Daly and Wilson (1988), who used previously published information on human homicide as evidence for the predictive potency of a particular behavioral paradigm about the biosocial causes of homicide.

In contrast to homicide, however, where the public record is very likely to be reflective of the actual prevalence of the behavior in a society, sexual behavior between adult men and pubescent boys has been a very private affair in Western societies since the early days of the Roman Empire. It is legendary that in pre-Roman Greek society such behavior was socially acceptable and normative (Dover, 1978; cf. Thornton, 1999), as it still is in a somewhat different form in certain Highland New Guinea societies, as reviewed by Schiefenhovel (1990). In the Orient, open pederasty between Buddhist priests and their pubescent male acolytes persisted well into the second millennium (Schalow, 1990).

Often, over various time frames, for biosocial reasons that are not well understood, the prevalence of a particular behavior in a particular human society varies. For reasons that are beyond the scope of this review, this variation almost always manifests itself by contracting or expanding the contexts in which the behavior

is expressed. There are many potential examples, of which I cite three that are sexologically relevant: (1) adult male/adult male, physical contact aggression in Western, industrialized societies has decreased over the last millennium and is now contextually channeled into highly ritualized, contact sports; (2) adult male/adult male, full body contact, physical, affiliative behavior (e.g., hugging) in Western industrialized societies has increased over the last few generations, but, except between homosexual males, is contextually limited to greetings, departures, and brief moments of joy and grief; (3) publicly exposing the previously covered female breast in at least some Western industrialized societies (e.g., in Europe) has increased over the last few generations, but is contextually limited to the beach.

Following the above examples, pederasty, which was openly lauded and expressed in general pedagogical contexts in ancient Greece (Plato, *Symposium* 209C), is now narrowly contextualized as a nonopenly discussed and expressed behavior in what appears to be a functionally-lineal vestige of the ancient Greek, mentor-pupil, role-type, adult male/pubescent boy relationship with a very notable exception that is addressed later. Within this narrowly contracted context of the 20th century, all we know about the current prevalence and expression of pederasty is what has been publicly spoken. It is presumptuous to assume that what has been publicly spoken, often in the context of criminal prosecution followed by million-dollar-a-touch civil litigation is a representative sample of the actual expression of the behavior in our society.

As pointed out by Boswell (1980): "Since Christianity was the official religion of the Roman Empire from the fourth century on and was the only organized force to survive the final disintegration of Roman institutions in the West after the barbarian invasions of the fifth century, it became the conduit through which the narrower morality of the later Empire reached Europe" (pp. 127-128). In Western civilizations, information that was culturally transmitted through this conduit appears to have been selectively triaged into verbal and nonverbal behavioral components by the standard bearers, most of whom over the last two millennia have been Roman Catholic priests. Some of the most anciently practiced behavior, pederasty to be specific, appears to have been transmitted in the Western, industrialized world in nonverbal behavior only, by the very persons who publicly, at least since mandatory celibacy in the 12th century, were speaking against it (Boswell, 1980).

The above type of discordance between speech and behavior is both common and understandable in terms of the function of human language, which, according to evolutionary theory, had to have evolved to get listeners to do what is in the best interest of speakers, not to convey "truth." Because natural selection often configures our perceptual ability so as to block our awareness of the motivation of our own social behavior (i.e., self-deception), it is often easier to see the discrepancies between our own speech and behavior by analogy by observing similar discrepancies in non-Western societies. The pioneering, early studies in Polynesian and Melanesian anthropology (e.g., Mead and Malinowski) have embarrassingly taught us that in simple societies, in reference to sexual behavior in particular,

there is almost always a marked difference between what people say should be done, what they actually do, and what they say they do. Even today, in some of the highly sex-stratified societies in the Highlands of New Guinea, the older males still publicly warn the younger adult males of the dangers of women, especially of their vaginal secretions, while at the same time they covertly continue to father the children (Schiefenhovel, 1990).

In light of the above, both Berry and Jenkins are partially correct, although both of their books reflect a narrow anthropo-, ethno-, and chronocentrism that precludes any real understanding of pederasty with anything more than the blindsightedness of our times. Berry did publicly verbalize (an “outing” in the vernacular) what for two millennia had been expressed privately in behavior only (e.g., Quinn, 1989), although in the process of doing this he unfairly blurred the important distinctions between homosexuality and pederasty. Jenkins correctly pointed out that the media magnification of the process can be conceptualized within the paradigm of social constructionism. The area in which they disagree—the extent to which mandatory celibacy in Roman Catholic priests contributes to the continuing propagation of pederasty in Western societies—is still an open question. In defense of the Roman Catholic priesthood, pederasty has also been propagated by adult men in other mentor-like relationships with pubescent boys in institutions like the Episcopalian priesthood, secular schools, and the Boy Scouts (Boyle, 1994). However, common sense does suggest that in a sexually reproducing species, a celibate class of adult men should attract “sexual outliers,” which it does. Second, based on unpublished data that I have gathered over the last 20 years in a now-closed, residential treatment center for Roman Catholic priests in New Mexico, and extrapolating from who could least be celibate with whom, adult women are a very underrepresented category.

Bullough’s (1976) historical description of Greek pederasty that existed more than two millennia ago can be extrapolated with a notable exception to the types of relationships that have continued to covertly exist between some priests and some pubescent boys over the centuries:

Adding to the acceptance of homosexuality was the institutionalization of pederasty within the educational system. The relationship between the adult and the adolescent boy was maintained by daily association, personal contact and example, intimate conversations, a sharing in more or less common life, and the gradual initiation of the younger into the social activities of the older men.... In this education, the family was more or less ignored.... Fathers paid little attention to their own male children but instead left their upbringing to an adult male whose relationship as lover of the son was a “union far closer” than what bound parents to children. Public opinion, and in some cases even the law, held the lover morally responsible for the development of his beloved. Pederasty came to be considered the most beautiful, the most perfect form of education. (pp. 108–109)

And this is the notable exception. In ancient Greece, parents sought out adult male mentors for their young sons. The relationships occurred at least with parental consent, although the issue of the capacity of consent of the younger interactant is as much a morally troublesome issue then as it is now. Nevertheless, even with this notable exception, without the aid of historians, human memory is conveniently short.

Who should buy this book? Jenkins' book is useful to persons interested in the application of methods of social psychology and the theory of social constructionism to certain social phenomena ("moral panics") that appear to be magnified by the mass media. In spite of my previous reservations about its qualitative rather than quantitative methodology, as well as its narrow centrisms, Jenkins' book is a well-done contribution to social science. Compared to some of the more notorious books on the subject of pederasty (e.g., Brongersma, 1986), it is at least relatively objective. However, in spite of its title, the book has only minor usefulness to sexologists interested in furthering their understanding of pedophilia and priests.

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Sex and Sexuality in Latin America. Edited by Daniel Balderston and Donna J. Guy. New York University Press, New York, 1997, 304 pp., \$20.00 (paperback).

Reviewed by Richard G. Parker, Ph.D.³

There has been a veritable boom in research on sexuality in Latin America over the course of the 1990s. The reasons for this boom are diverse, ranging from the emergence and development of feminist and gay/lesbian rights movements to

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concern with a range of health issues, such as population, reproductive health and rights, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Whatever the reasons, however, sexuality has become a focus for research in a growing range of disciplines, and an important window for understanding life in Latin American cultures. This volume brings together some of the best of this work, particularly in the disciplines of anthropology, history, and literary and cultural studies.

Following a brief introduction by the editors that effectively maps some of the major areas of research on sex and sexuality in Latin America, the volume has been divided into four major sections. The first of these sections, “Questioning Identities,” focuses above all on the fluidity of gender and sexuality in a range of Latin American societies, drawing attention in particular to transgender movements and the playful transgression of sexual boundaries. The second section, “Policing Sexuality,” on the contrary, looks at the diverse ways in which sexual (and gendered) transgressions have been repressed and controlled by diverse social institutions, such as the military, the police, the criminal justice system, and even governmental decree in different Latin American societies. The third section, “Family Values,” revisits the importance of family in structuring the sexual field in Latin American societies, but without the facile assumptions about traditionalism and patriarchal values that have typically taken shape as stereotypes about Latin American culture—offering, on the contrary, a far more nuanced vision of the remarkably complex family systems found throughout the region, and their multidimensional configuration of gender and sexuality among their members. The fourth section, “Redefinitions,” concentrates analysis on a theme that in fact runs throughout the volume: the complex processes of change that can be found taking place today in the social construction of gender and sexuality in Latin American societies, in a region in which tradition, modernity, and postmodernity so often seem to coexist and interact in the course of daily life.

Although all of the essays collected in this volume are generally of high quality, a number stand out in particular as especially characteristic of some of the best research in the field. The lead essay by Lancaster on playful gender crossing in the daily interaction of a Nicaraguan family offers a particularly compelling application of recent work by Butler and others on gender as performance (as well as on the phenomenologic conditions in which anthropologic field research on gender and sexuality in fact gets done). Caulfield’s historical study of prostitution in Rio de Janeiro between 1850 and 1942 provides vivid evidence of the extent to which sexuality has served as a complex field of power in which race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and local and national politics have intersected and interacted in the construction or constitution of nation building and national identity. Guy’s historical study of Argentine concepts of mothering in the late 19th and early 20th centuries offers equally compelling insight into the complex tensions and interplay between religion and social hygiene as competing forces shaping multiple, contested, and constantly changing understandings of the nature of mothering and motherhood. And Balderston’s analysis of the films of Mexican

director Jaime Humberto Hermisillo offers a sense of the fundamental importance and complexity of the cultural construction of bisexuality as well as of the complex sexual politics that is evolving today in Latin American cultural production. Indeed, it is perhaps this tension between an emphasis on the cultural construction of sexuality and the sexual construction of culture that most clearly runs throughout the essays in this volume, in a sense creating a thread that brings them together conceptually as well as topically.

Although it is unfair to expect everything of a single volume, the limitations of Balderston and Guy's collection make it more useful for some readers than for others. Perhaps most obviously, all of the essays emerge from the growing field of cultural studies, primarily in the United States, and the volume thus provides little or no insight into the rapidly growing body of literature on sexual behavior and practice that has emerged particularly in the wake of HIV/AIDS (usually with a more sociologic or even epidemiologic and/or sexologic perspective). Perhaps even more troubling is that although many of the authors are themselves Latin American or Latinos, all are based in North American (or, in one case, European) universities, so that the collected essays offer no sense of the important body of research that is currently emerging in Latin America itself. In this regard, however, the editors have usefully chosen to close off the volume with an extensive bibliography of gender and sexuality studies in Latin America that provides one of the best available overviews of the current research in this area, and that helps to direct interested readers to at least some of the other lines of research currently being carried out on and in Latin America.

Role of Sexual Abuse in the Etiology of Borderline Personality Disorder.

Edited by Mary C. Zanarini. American Psychiatric Press, Washington, DC, 1997, 236 pp., \$40.00.

Reviewed by Elsa Marziali, Ph.D.⁴

In the first chapter of this edited volume, Zanarini sets the tone for the research reports to follow by cautioning the reader that although childhood sexual abuse may be present in the histories of some disorders common to women, as, for example, borderline personality disorder (BPD), not all women with this diagnosis have been sexually traumatized during childhood. Rather, the etiology of BPD is best represented by a multidimensional model, which includes issues of genetic/biological predisposition, adverse environmental/familial factors, possible neurologic impairments, and early childhood trauma (sexual abuse being one example).

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Several chapters (2, 3, 8, and 10) focus directly on examining associations between the experience of childhood sexual abuse and subsequent diagnosis of BPD in adult women. There is considerable consensus across these studies regarding the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse in BPD patients, with rates ranging between 20% and 80%. The higher rates overrepresent single incidents of sexual abuse and include, as well, all categories of perpetrators (Paris and Zweig-Frank, Chapter 2), whereas the lower rates are more apt to signify caretaker perpetrators (father, mother, stepfather, stepmother). Of importance for the BPD group who have experienced childhood sexual abuse are the distinctions made as to (1) age of first experience; (2) whether penetration occurred; (3) frequency and duration of episodes; and (4) number of perpetrators. Equally important in determining the impact of early sexual abuse on the severity of symptoms of BPD are the coexisting factors of physical abuse, emotional and physical neglect, and repeated separations from or loss of a parent.

The reported studies challenge the hypothesis suggested by Herman and van der Kolk (1987) that BPD is related to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to the experience of early childhood trauma, including sexual abuse. Not surprisingly, this single-factor hypothesis as to the etiology of BPD is not supported. Rather, several of the chapter authors conclude that distinctions must be made as to which etiologic factors apply to which subgroups of borderline patients. For example, certain features of temperament and/or neurologic dysfunction combined with early experiences of abuse (physical, sexual, and neglect) may predict to more severe, long-term pathologic outcomes. Whereas when these early experiences do not occur in combination, the diagnosis of BPD in adults may result, either through a pathway of abuse and neglect or through a pathway of neurologic injury (Rising Kimble *et al.*, Chapter 9). These are important distinctions because of their obvious relevance for understanding (1) symptom range and severity; (2) types of comorbidity; (3) response to different treatment orientations, structures, and duration; (4) lifetime course; and (5) ultimate outcomes. For example, the possibility that a spectrum of severity exists within the BPD diagnostic group has been supported (Marziali *et al.*, 1994).

Three chapters (4, 6, and 7) examine the prevalence and meanings of specific acting out and self-destructive behaviors in women with BPD. Jordan *et al.* (Chapter 4) conducted a study of the psychosocial status of women prison inmates. In particular, they explored the current and life history experiences of abuse and "extreme events" in three disorders identified in the study population: BPD, PTSD, and antisocial personality disorder (ASPD). Of the original sample of 805 female inmates, about 50% met criteria for one or more of the three disorders. A total of 28% met criteria for BPD and, of these, 50% also met criteria for PTSD. The analyses of early traumatic experiences for inmates with a diagnosis of BPD showed that 32% had been sexually assaulted before age 11. Also, women inmates with BPD tended to grow up in homes where violence against some family members was common; however, few of the inmates (either with or without BPD) had

experienced serious physical abuse in early childhood. Of note is the fact that in a model-fitting regression analysis, only 17% of the variance was accounted for by the study variables (e.g., sexual abuse, family violence, early loss, and/or separations). Thus, the contribution of factors not included in the study (e.g., biologic disposition, neurologic impairment, other family dynamics) are unknown.

Zweig-Frank and Paris (Chapter 6) and Dubo *et al.* (Chapter 7) present data on the possible associations between childhood trauma and self-mutilation and suicidal behaviors in BPD. Zweig-Frank and Paris' interesting study looked at childhood sexual abuse as a predictor of dissociation and self-mutilation in adult subjects with BPD. Neither dissociation nor childhood sexual abuse accounted for self-mutilation, and the authors review a number of possible explanations for these negative findings, including biologic and social factors. As expected, Dubo *et al.* found that 78% of the BPD subjects reported histories of self-mutilation and 80% reported histories of suicide attempts. Of the multiple childhood abusive factors studied, only caretaker sexual abuse was associated with lifetime number of self-mutilation episodes and duration of self-mutilation behavior. There were no associations between any of the abuse variables and number of suicide attempts, but duration of suicidal behaviors across the life span was strongly associated with caretaker sexual abuse, caretaker emotional denial, and lack of a real relationship with a caretaker.

In discussing their findings, this group of investigators raise some interesting questions about the etiology of BPD. Does early physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect, loss or separations predict the onset of BPD? Or is a more complex explanatory model needed? They speculate that affect dysregulation witnessed in patients with BPD is associated with self-harming behaviors, and that the inability to process emotions effectively is due to early disruptions of attachment to primary caregivers due to separations, abuse, and neglect. Furthermore, these negative experiences may interfere with normal development of biologic systems of affective self-regulation (Cicchetti, 1989; van der Kolk and Greenberg, 1987). These findings have been further supported by studies that show that early childhood experiences of abuse may affect the laterality of the developing brain, possibly leading to increased right hemispheric activity (Teicher *et al.*, 1994). The resulting diminished hemispheric intercommunication may contribute to the development of affective instability and impulsivity. Other recent work also suggests that biologic factors may be associated with self-destructive behavior; for example, Simeon *et al.* (1992) suggest that underlying serotonergic dysfunction may facilitate suicidal behavior and self-mutilation.

The final two chapters of the book deal with the treatment implications of the study findings that link early childhood trauma to adult BPD symptoms and self-destructive behaviors. Wagner and Linehan (Chapter 11) provide an overview of their model of treatment, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and place special emphasis on the importance of understanding the BPD patient's early childhood experiences of an "invalidating environment." The therapeutic strategies of DBT

reflect acceptance of the patient's current capacities balanced with acknowledgement of the patient's potential for change. Linehan (1993) outlines three stages of DBT: (1) building skills for managing daily living more effectively; (2) emotionally processing past traumatic events; and (3) developing the ability to trust the self. The importance of developing a positive therapeutic relationship, necessary for sustaining the work of therapy, is emphasized.

In the final chapter, Gunderson argues that the treatment needs of BPD patients are long term and best met by having one therapist–manager oversee the multiple inputs and course of the therapy. The initial phase of therapy requires the therapist to help the patient to cope with real life stresses and a cognitive behavioral approach plus the involvement of significant others are thought to be important. To sustain this preliminary therapeutic work, the patient and therapist must develop a stable therapeutic alliance that involves the therapist's validation of the patient's painful early life trauma while being sensitive to the transference significance of what is disclosed. Gunderson believes that dynamic psychotherapy is effective only after stabilization of disruptive behaviors and alliance formation.

In summary, Zanarini has collected a series of important studies that provide a balanced view of the contribution of early childhood trauma to the development of BPD in adults. Both her own work and that of the investigators whose research reports comprise the book chapters support a multifactorial model of the etiology of BPD. The implication for treatment are equally complex. Etiologic models that include neurologic factors would suggest that pharmacologic treatments might be more efficacious but there is as yet little evidence to support this approach. Psychotherapeutic models that include components of cognitive behavioral interventions have been shown to be especially effective in reducing self-destructive behaviors (Linehan, 1993). Individual psychodynamic psychotherapy has been the most frequently used model of treatment for BPD. Patients who are able to engage in, and sustain, this long-term, exploratory model of treatment do improve. Of concern has been the high dropout rate (i.e., for a subgroup of patients with BPD the frequency and severity of their acting out behaviors preclude commitment to a self-reflective, insight-oriented approach to changing pathologic behavior). Interpersonal Group Psychotherapy (IGP) has proved effective in dealing with early alliance building, management of self-destructive behaviors, and changes in self concept that generalize to situations outside of treatment (Marziali and Munroe-Blum, 1994). In contrast to other models of treatment that have been tested with BPD, IGP places special emphasis on helping the patient mourn the loss of a wished for, nurturing, sensitive primary caregiver. In actuality, the primary caregiver was psychologically lost because early childhood experiences of abuse and neglect disrupted the development of an optimal attachment experience. It is this painful reality that the patient must acknowledge while drawing on personal resources needed to mourn the loss and to affirm self-respect and control over one's life. A group therapeutic environment is well suited to achieving these goals.

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